

Washington, DC – Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA) announced today that East Whittier City School District is receiving \$225,000 in federal funding for the Project Action Drop-out Prevention Program. Sánchez requested the funding in 2009, to provide additional professional school counseling and social work assistance to students who are at high risk of dropping out of school.

“This is great news for East Whittier and our most vulnerable students,” said Rep. Linda Sánchez. **“I believe this innovative program is a model for improving student retention and academic performance throughout the state and all of America.”**

The funds Sánchez secured will fund the Project Action Drop-out Prevention Program, which will provide homeless children and children with incarcerated parents with the out-of-classroom support they need to succeed inside the classroom. The District has already hired new staff, including four school social work graduate students from UCLA, USC, and Cal State Fullerton, to work directly with students and support their academic success. The program will partner with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and provide mentors to participating students. In addition, Project Action staff will work to identify and secure the full spectrum of resources that students need. The project will match social workers with students to provide intensive case management, promoting academic achievement in collaboration with East Whittier’s existing Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative.

“As a school social worker I always struggled with those students for whom their greatest need was time with a positive adult role model,” said Tanya Gavino de Flores, EWCSO Mentoring Social Worker.

“Students with absentee parents, with an incarcerated parent, and homeless youth have such difficulties in the school setting and are at risk for academic failure.

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I am thrilled that our district, through Congresswoman Sanchez, now has funds dedicated to recruiting and matching mentors from the Whittier community for our students.

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I look forward to building a program that will continue to grow and serve the needs of our Whittier youth.”

Rep. Sánchez initially secured the funding as part of the Omnibus appropriations passed by Congress and signed by President Obama. This innovative program reflects Rep. Sánchez’ efforts to create similar nationwide programs through the Increased Student Achievement through Increased Student Support Act and the Put School Counselors Where They’re Needed Act.

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